Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP)  
Assessment Overview

Calhoun Community College  
Spring 2009

METHODS

The Essay Writing and Mathematics CAAP assessments were administered on March 9, 10, 11, and 12 to a total of 705 Calhoun students—368 completed the Mathematics assessment and 337 the Essay Writing assessment. The total number of students assessed represents a statistically significant sample at the 95% confidence level with a 5 percent margin of error. However, the number of students assessed in each subject area is not statistically significant.

A total of 30 classes were carefully selected to ensure participation from students enrolled in day and evening classes as well as classes at both campuses.

Objectives for CAAP Testing and Use of CAAP Results. The CAAP assessment was administered primarily for the purpose of assessing student achievement in general education learning outcomes. The 2009 CAAP results are compared to those of previous CAAP testing in order to identify areas of strength and weakness in student achievement. Specifically, the Essay Writing assessment is used to measure the general education outcome of “Communication Skills” and the Mathematics assessment is used to measure the general education outcome of “Quantitative Analysis.”

Selection of Sample. The Dean for Planning and Research selected the courses in which CAAP assessments were administered. Selection was based on the following criteria: 1) a representative sample of students from each location including Huntsville Day, Huntsville Evening, Decatur Day, and Decatur Evening; 2) classes that likely contained students who had taken preparatory courses for the selected assessment; and 3) “high enrollment” classes to optimize the sample size. A total of 1,006 students were targeted in the selected classes, but not all the students attended on assessment day and some of the answer sheets were not scored for a variety of reasons. A copy of all courses assessed can be obtained from the Office of Planning and Research.
Assessment Timeline.
The following series of events occurred:
January 23 – Memo from the Vice President for Instruction and Student Services to instructors announcing spring semester assessment dates.
February 16 – Email to all instructors identifying selected sections for CAAP testing.
March 2 – Reminder memo from the Dean of Planning and Research to all faculty of selected courses.
March 4 – College-wide Professional Development activities with overview of CAAP, CAPP and CCSSE assessments.
March 9 -12 – Testing occurs.
April 8 – Follow-up meeting to improve assessment process.
April 27 – Questionnaire to all faculty participating in the assessment to generate ideas to improve process.

Study Limitations.
Student Effort: Students completing the CAAP assessments realize their scores have no effect on their overall course grade. Consequently, some students do not perform at their best level. This is evident because some students indicated they did not “give it their best effort” on the assessment form and some completed the hour-long exam in approximately ten minutes. A total of 43 students taking the Math assessment marked either “Gave Little Effort” or “Gave no Effort” on their answer sheets. 84 students gave no response for the same item. The question was not asked on the Writing Essay.

Cost: The College has adopted seven general education learning outcomes. The cost of administering the CAAP assessment prohibits a statistically significant sample in each area for which a test is available. Currently, no CAAP test is available for “Information and Computer Literacy” and “Cultural Diversity” skills.

Student Level: Although attempts are made to administer the assessment in sophomore level classes, many freshman level students completed the tests. In those instances, it is difficult to ascertain what, if any, demonstrated skill was the result of instruction obtained at Calhoun.

Recommendations for Future Testing. The CAAP assessment costs approximately $10,000 to administer. In future years, additional funding is needed to ensure more test instruments are administered in a broad range of topics. In addition, some method for encouraging students to give their best effort in completing the test should be developed. Providing a performance-based incentive for students may encourage more enthusiastic participation.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Office of Planning and Research at Calhoun Community College acknowledges the Vice President for Instruction and Student Services, Division Deans, and selected faculty for their cooperation in administering the CAAP assessment.

Trained volunteers including Tammy Kerby, Alicia Taylor, Sandra Romberg, Chuck Brasher, Jessica Bradley, Kenneth Anderson, Jeanean Duncan and Dena Stephenson administered the CAAP assessments and their assistance is appreciated.
Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP)

Findings

COMPARISON OF CALHOUN MEAN TO NATIONAL MEAN

2009 CAAP assessment results included a comparison of the mean score of Calhoun students to the national mean for sophomore-level students at other two-year institutions. Results revealed the mean score for Calhoun students on the Mathematics and Writing Essay assessments was at or slightly higher than the national mean. Scores on the Math assessment ranged from 40 (low) to 80 (high) for the total test score and 5 (low) to 25 (high) for the subtest scores. Test scores for the Writing Essay Test are reported on a range of 1.00 (low) to 6.00 (high). This report contains results for all students, freshmen-level students, and sophomore-level students.

ALL STUDENTS

Writing Essay. The Writing Essay assessment was administered in 14 English courses, including one ENG 272 class, two ENG 262 classes, one ENG 261 class, four ENG 252 classes, five ENG 251 classes, and one ENG 102 class. A total of 461 students were enrolled in the courses, but only 337 tests were scored due to absences, withdrawals, and essay sheets that were discarded due to their being incomplete, damaged, or notably off topic. The following table depicts the comparison of the Calhoun mean score with the national mean score.
For the Writing Essay assessment, the CAAP includes a subset score for Essay 1 and Essay 2. The following tables compare the mean scores of Calhoun students in the subset scores with the national mean score in each of the subset areas.

The mean score for Calhoun students for the Essay 1 Subset was slightly higher than the national mean.

The mean score for Calhoun students for the Essay 2 Subset was slightly lower than the national mean.
Mathematics. The Mathematics assessment was administered in 16 Math courses, including three MTH 125 classes, one MTH 116 class, two MTH 113 classes, and ten MTH 112 classes. A total of 511 students were enrolled in the courses, but only 368 tests were scored due to the reasons cited previously in the Writing Essay results. The following table depicts the comparison of the Calhoun mean score with the national mean score.

For the Mathematics assessment, the CAAP includes a subset score in Basic Algebra and College Algebra. The following tables compare the mean scores of Calhoun students in the subset scores with the national mean score in each of the subset areas.

The mean score for Calhoun students for the Basic Algebra Subset was slightly higher than the national mean.
The mean score for Calhoun students for the College Algebra Subset was slightly higher than the national mean.
FRESHMEN STUDENTS

Self-reported demographics revealed that 44 Calhoun freshmen students completed the Writing Essay assessment and 164 completed the Mathematics assessment. The scores of freshmen Calhoun students are compared to scores of freshmen students at other two-year institutions. The results of these comparisons revealed that the Calhoun freshmen mean score is slightly higher than the national mean score in both the Writing Essay and Mathematics assessments. The following tables depict these results.

Freshmen Writing Essay Results. Calhoun freshmen students who took the Writing Essay assessment scored slightly higher than the national mean.

![Writing Essay Comparison Chart]

Freshmen Mathematics Results. Calhoun freshmen students who took the Mathematics assessment scored higher than the national mean.

![Mathematics Comparison Chart]
SOPHOMORE STUDENTS

Self-reported demographics revealed that 239 Calhoun sophomores completed the Writing Essay assessment and 141 completed the Mathematics assessment. The scores of sophomore Calhoun students are compared to scores of sophomores at other two-year institutions. The results of these comparisons revealed that the Calhoun sophomore mean score is at or above the national mean score in both Writing Essay and Mathematics. The following tables depict these results.

**Sophomore Writing Essay Results.** Calhoun sophomore students who took the Writing Skills assessment scored at the national mean.

**Sophomore Mathematics Results.** Calhoun sophomore students who took the Mathematics assessment scored higher than the national mean.
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SCORING AT OR ABOVE THE NATIONAL MEAN

Calhoun sends certificates of achievement to those students who score at or above the national mean for each assessment. CAAP results for 2009 reveal that Calhoun students performed well on each assessment. The following charts depict these results.

**Writing Essay.** 65% of all Calhoun students taking the Writing Essay assessment scored at or above the national mean.

**Mathematics.** 78% of all Calhoun students taking the Mathematics assessment scored at or above the national mean.
COMPARISON OF 2007 AND 2009 RESULTS

A comparison of 2007 and 2009 results indicates that the percentage of students who scored at or above the national mean increased in both the Writing Essay and Mathematics assessments. However, it is important to note that the number of students participating in the assessment significantly increased from 2007 to 2009. The following table depicts these changes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Test</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of Calhoun Students Scoring at or Above National Mean</td>
<td>Number of Students Assessed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Essay</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUMMARY

The 2009 CAAP assessment results indicate that Calhoun students performed better than their peers at other two-year institutions in Writing Essay and Mathematics. The 2009 CAAP assessment results are shared college-wide for use in generating ideas to enhance general education skills.

Calhoun plans to continue the use of the CAAP assessment to monitor the achievement of Calhoun students in mastering general education learning outcomes. However, the CAAP assessment is only one instrument in the College’s ongoing assessment model. Departmental data through standardized testing and CCSSE results are also being collected and analyzed to determine student achievement in mastering the general education learning outcomes.